



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of General Counsel
Management Planning & Analysis

810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington DC 20420
www.va.gov/ogc

In Reply Refer To: **19-02529-F**

January 7, 2019

Sent via email address: 55929-69118999@requests.muckrock.com

Mr. Jasper Craven
MuckRock News
DEPT MR 63613
411A Highland Avenue
Somerville, NC 02144-2516

Dear Mr. Craven:

This is in reference to your Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act request, dated November 9, 2018, which you sent to the VA FOIA Service for various VA component offices. Your email request was interpreted as a FOIA request for records which may be maintained by the Office of General Counsel. The OGC Officer is designated to respond to such requests on behalf of the General Counsel. The OGC FOIA Requests mailbox was assigned your request on December 20, 2018. Your request specifically states:

"All e-mail correspondence between Bill First, former U.S. Senator, and Darin Selnick, David Shulkin, as well as members of current VA senior leadership (detailed here: <https://www.va.gov/opa/bios/>) between May 1, 2017 and present day. Key words include: "issues," "AECOM," "partnership," "infrastructure," "palliative," "IT," "help" and "Valor."

Your request was assigned to OGC FOIA Tracking Number 19-02529-F. Please refer to this number in any future correspondence to this office.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a decentralized process for responding to FOIA requests which means that each VA component, i.e., OGC, VHA, VBA, etc., has a separate designated FOIA Officers responsible for responding to requests by the component office. All FOIA requests for Office of General Counsel records are processed by the FOIA Officer in Washington, DC.

The Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552(A)(a)(ii), places all FOIA requesters in one of three categories for fee purposes. The three categories of FOIA requesters are commercial use; educational institutions, noncommercial scientific institutions, representatives of the news media; and all other requesters.

We have classified you as a representative of the news media. As such, we may charge you for some of our duplication costs, but we will not charge you for our search or review costs; you also are entitled to up to 100 pages of photocopies (or an equivalent volume) for free. See 38 C.F.R. § 1.561(b)(7). If, after taking into consideration your fee category entitlements, our processing costs are less than \$50.00, we will not bill you because the cost of collection would be greater than the fee collected. See 38 C.F.R. § 1.561(b)(7).

For your information, this office assigns incoming requests to one of three tracks: simple, complex, or expedited. **Each FOIA request is then handled on a first-in, first-out (FIFO) basis in relation to other requests in the same track.** At this time, your request has been assigned to the Complex track. Simple requests usually receive a response in about two to three months, whereas complex requests take considerably longer.

We regret the necessity of this delay, but assure you that your request will be processed as soon as possible. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact M. Renee Baxter at email address OGCFOIArequests@va.gov or you may contact the OGC FOIA Requester Service at (202) 461-7860 between the work hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time).

Sincerely,

M. Renee Baxter

M. Renee Baxter
OGC FOIA Officer